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A Bush in Hand . . .

There appears to have been an unwarranted negative reaction to President Ford's nomination of the U.S. representative to Peking, George Bush, as the successor to William Colby as director of the CIA. The criticism stems from Bush's previous service as chairman of the Republican National Committee. There may be reasons why Bush should not head the CIA, but his experience as party chairman is not one of them.

As President Ford should have pointed out, Bush has served with distinction in all of his varied governmental duties.

Even Washington's cynical press corps is in broad agreement that Bush's stewardship of the GOP represented a highly competent regime. It came during the Watergate period, yet Bush managed to steer the party clear of a badly tarnished administration.

Why write Bush off simply because he has served as a national party leader? His service in Congress was praiseworthy. Equally commendable was his tenure as ambassador to the U.N. And while some consider all his appointive posts in the category of "graveyard jobs," the same critics will concede that there were no adverse results from Bush's service in any of his positions.

There is no reason to suspect that Bush will not perform with demonstrated skill in the sensitive and non-political CIA post. Nor is there any reason to doubt that he will not do as well in further public service as other national party chairmen have done. Such service did no harm to the careers of Sen. Henry Jackson, D-Wash., or Republican Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas.

Going back further into history, it is useful to recall that Cordell Hull's distinguished career as secretary of state was preceded by service as chairman of the Democratic party.